1994
Executive Research Project
S5

The Fine Line Between Peacekeeping and War

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Unclassified
SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

1a. REPORT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION Unclassified	1b. RESTRICTIVE MARKINGS
2a. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION AUTHORITY N/A	3. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY OF REPORT Distribution Statement A: Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.
2b. DECLASSIFICATION / DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE N/A	
4. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S) NDU-ICAF-94-25	5. MONITORING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S) Same
6a. NAME OF PERFORMING ORGANIZATION Industrial College of the Armed Forces 6b. OFFICE SYMBOL (If applicable) ICAF-FAP	7a. NAME OF MONITORING ORGANIZATION National Defense University
6c. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code) Fort Lesley J. McNair Washington, D.C. 20319-6000	7b. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code) Fort Lesley J. McNair Washington, D.C. 20319-6000
8a. NAME OF FUNDING / SPONSORING ORGANIZATION 8b. OFFICE SYMBOL (If applicable)	9. PROCUREMENT INSTRUMENT IDENTIFICATION NUMBER
8c. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code)	10. SOURCE OF FUNDING NUMBERS PROGRAM ELEMENT NO. / PROJECT NO. / TASK NO. / WORK UNIT ACCESSION NO.

11. TITLE (Include Security Classification)
The Fine Line Between Peacekeeping and War

12. PERSONAL AUTHOR(S) Jose A. Betancourt

13a. TYPE OF REPORT Research	13b. TIME COVERED FROM Aug 93 TO Apr 94	14. DATE OF REPORT (Year, Month, Day) April 1994	15. PAGE COUNT 37

16. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTATION

17. COSATI CODES			18. SUBJECT TERMS (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number)
FIELD	GROUP	SUB-GROUP	

19. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number)

SEE ATTACHED

20. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY OF ABSTRACT ☒ UNCLASSIFIED/UNLIMITED ☒ SAME AS RPT. ☐ DTIC USERS	21. ABSTRACT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION Unclassified	
22a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE INDIVIDUAL Judy Clark	22b. TELEPHONE (Include Area Code) (202) 475-1889	22c. OFFICE SYMBOL ICAF-FAP

DD FORM 1473, 84 MAR — 83 APR edition may be used until exhausted. All other editions are obsolete.

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE
UNCLASSIFIED

Betancourt

Abstract

The post-Cold War international environment is being shaped by forces of integration and disintegration. The civil war in Somalia is an example of the challenges that will confront the U.S. as it seeks to exercise leadership both unilaterally and in multinational forums. Somalia is the first case after the Cold War in which U.N. forces were committed to enforce peace under Chapter VII of the Charter. However, the transition from a humanitarian assistance and peacekeeping mission to peace enforcement was made abruptly, without the benefit of thoughtful discussion of all of the elements that created the conflict. Consequently, U.S. force was used inappropriately to achieve ill defined objectives, resulting in the loss of American troops and the decision to effect a complete withdrawal from Somalia. There are many excellent lessons to be learned from the U.S.'s involvement in Somalia. Principal among these is that in today's increasingly anarchic international environment, prudence dictates that the decision to send U.S. forces in harm's way should be the result of deliberate, thoughtful discussion at the highest level of our government. However, to continue to exercise its world leadership role, the U.S. must not let Somalia be the defining experience in the use of force after the Cold War.

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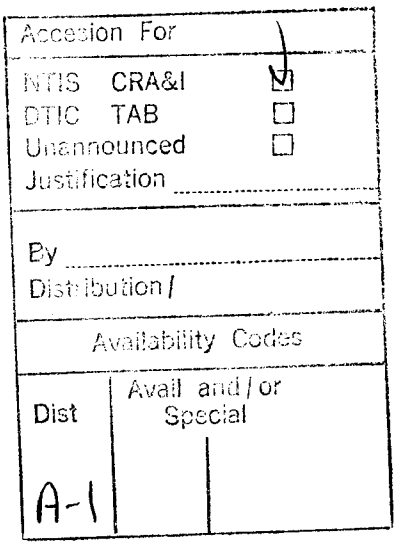

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I. Introduction

> The first principle of strategy is that political purpose must dominate strategy. The use of military force without a clear political purpose is ultimately futile and self-defeating.[1]

For the last forty-five years, America's military strategy and force posture were shaped by a bipolar environment with a clearly defined threat to vital national interests. The collapse of the Soviet Empire and the Warsaw Pact removed a clear threat to our nation's survival and to our way of life, but it did not result in a new world order or in a universally peaceful international environment. Instead, forces were unleashed that led to integration in some regions and to disintegration in others. Recent events indicate that the forces of disintegration predominate internationally. It is these forces that pose the new challenges for American security. While global war plans to contain the Soviet Union are no longer needed, new approaches to our security dictate that policy makers consider carefully how and where we commit American forces. In this new environment, the temptation to commit forces to assist in humanitarian and what may appear to be relatively benign peacekeeping missions may lead to unintended consequences. Somalia is a case in point. Here, what started as a humanitarian mission evolved into peace-enforcement without necessary adjustments to the military strategy to meet changed political objectives. Absent recognition of all of the dangers inherent in this situation, American troops were killed in what many see as a senseless war where America has no national interests at stake.

I will examine the complex set of circumstances that led to the decision to commit U.S. forces to a humanitarian and peacekeeping mission in Somalia and the subsequent enlargement of the mission to include peace enforcement and nation building. After providing a brief

historical context for the current situation in Somalia, I will analyze the circumstances that led to the decision to commit U.S. forces to a mission that seemed to offer the opportunity to provide, at relatively low risk, much needed help to the starving victims of brutal civil war. I will discuss the evolving role of the United Nations and regional organizations in peacekeeping, peacemaking, and peace enforcement operations to show the critical leadership role the United States must continue to play in these.

I argue that Somalia has provided some valuable lessons on the use of force in an increasingly anarchic international environment. Then I show the reasons why it is unwise to allow the Somalia experience to cause the nation to reject the use of force elsewhere in the world, especially in areas where we have more clearly defined national interests. While Somalia offers valuable lessons for future humanitarian and peacekeeping missions, it is not and cannot be allowed to become the paradigm that governs the use of force after the Cold War. How lessons from the Somalia experience are articulated will determine whether America heeds the dangerous call from some quarters to recede into isolationism or whether it continues to recognize its responsibility to provide important international leadership.

II. Historical Background: Genesis of the Conflict

The fighting in Somalia has antecedents in three very important social and historical themes that find expression not only in Africa but in other post-colonial areas as well. The first of these is the clan nature of the population of Somalia. Somalis are principally a nomadic people who are not receptive to government control from a central ruling elite. Second, the Somali territory, like that of other former European colonies, was defined by its former English and Italian rulers without regard to ethnic integrity or to competing clan alliances. Third, post-

colonial rulers attempted to impose strict rules of government from the top down, often insisting that the Somalis abandon their clan kinships and nomadic way of life. Each of these antecedents helps to explain the crisis that led to American and international community involvement.

After Somalia was granted its independence by the British and the Italians in the 1960s, the newly emerged leader, Siad Barre, attempted to remove vestiges of nomadic tradition and to diminish the influence of clan leaders. But the Somalis resisted because they have a long history of clan structure within a society that is highly fragmented. It is usually the clan that provides the most meaningful political structure within their society and their history is one of conflicts that derive primarily from concepts of superiority, pride and from struggles over water and pastures. For example, those Somalis who engage in herding have always held the farmers in contempt.[2] In all, there are six modern clan families in Somalia, all predominantly Islamic, and each able to trace its history for centuries.[3]

The second important historical antecedent has to do with the way in which the current borders of Somalia were drawn. British and Italian rulers left a legacy of artificial borders that have little to do with where the Somali people are located or with the identity of various clans. This contributed to inter-clan rivalries throughout Somalia. While the colonial powers drew borders that were convenient, they neglected to consider that nomadic life demands self-reliance and fierce independence for survival in the harsh climactic conditions of the Horn of Africa. When disagreements about territory or other matters arose among the different clans, these were adjudicated by tribal elders. When agreed upon contracts were broken, blood money was often paid to the tribal elders. Failure to pay blood money could, and often did, lead to bloody war.[4] These tendencies were aggravated by the imposition of artificial borders.

Modern institutions imported from Europe failed here as in many other post-colonial areas to unite the Somali people. Somali clans still see their status enhanced by their ability to overcome other tribes either in sheer numbers or in fighting potential. Government administrators often recognized this and tried to mediate with elders to keep some semblance of peace, no matter how anarchic and bloody that peace might appear to be. Finally, though the last ruler of Somalia, Siad Barre, had some success in holding his country together for over twenty years, many of his attempts to rapidly incorporate his people into some semblance of a state, backfired. He preached the benefits of modern socialism and established programs that were completely inappropriate for local conditions. Somalis simply resisted.[5] Further social experiments in his country began to arouse the ire of opponents within the military to the point that in 1986 senior military officers openly plotted to overthrow his government. Though he regained control, this would be the start of open civil war in a country that had never known any real peace or prosperity. Siad Barre's increasingly more ruthless methods ended when he was overthrown in January 1991.

By 1992, the collapse of the civil government resulted in open warfare among the clans and starvation for the thousands of civilians who were caught in the cross fire. Famine and starvation were not the result of a natural disaster. They resulted from civil war aimed at ousting Siad Barre. In his place, two strongmen, Ali Mahdi Mohammed and Farah Aidid, would compete for control of territory and for rule over a country that had existed only tenuously prior to 1992 and that now was completely devoid of even the semblance of anything that could be called a government. By the fall of 1992, Somali street gangs and thugs made it impossible for the U.N. to distribute food, fuel, medicine, or other supplies.[6]

A 500 man Pakistani force was deployed under U. N. auspices in October 1992 to provide security for the airport in the Somali capital. Almost immediately, Aidid complained that he had not been consulted, but that other clan leaders had. [7] The situation deteriorated to the extent that many countries that had promised the U.N. that they would provide forces to act as peacekeepers now refused. They recognized that there was no peace to keep. When it became evident that Pakistani and other troops in the U.N. mission to Somalia (UNOSOM) would be unable to insure the delivery of food, the United States urged the U.N. to accept the offer of over 30,000 troops in a coalition put together by the United States to guarantee the delivery of badly needed food and other supplies. The U.S. was prepared to use force to help to alleviate the misery and the dying. Dramatic pictures on American television of starving Somali men, women and children would cause President Bush to observe that the situation there was absolutely hopeless. "There is no government in Somalia," he said. "Law and order have broken down--anarchy prevails."[8] Buoyed by America's recent success in putting together the coalition that won the war in the Persian Gulf, there was no reason to doubt that the United States could embark on a mission to save the Somali people from mass starvation. President Bush evidently believed that the U.S. would be able to accomplish the mission and to execute an exit strategy that would require withdrawal of troops by January 19, 1993, leaving only a residual U.S. presence to keep the peace in Somalia. This way, the new U.S. president, President Clinton, would not be burdened by the commitment that President Bush had made.

III. Peacekeeping and Peacemaking After the Persian Gulf War

> We are clearly witnessing what is probably an irresistible shift in public attitudes toward the belief that the defense of the oppressed in the name of morality should prevail over frontiers and legal documents.[9]

Before proceeding with a discussion of the potential requirements for the use of force in the post-Cold War era, it is important to define the terms that currently govern U.N. operations involving the use of armed forces around the world. As used in this essay, peacekeeping, peace-enforcement and peacemaking will be defined as follows:[10]

> o Peacekeeping: It involves monitoring and enforcing a cease fire *agreed to by two or more former combatants*. It proceeds in an atmosphere where peace exists and where the former combatants minimally prefer peace to continued war.
>
> o Peace-enforcement: This is the physical interposition of armed forces to separate ongoing combatants to create a cease fire that does not exist. One or more of the combatants oppose the cease fire. *Peace enforcers are often not welcomed and the neutrality that distinguishes peacekeepers from active combatants will be lost.*
>
> o Peacemaking: As used by the U.N., this term implies *the use of diplomatic means to end fighting*. It seeks to use a wide array of diplomatic instruments to halt conflicts that have broken out.

In the first 40 years of the U.N.'s life, it undertook 13 peacekeeping operations. In the years following 1989, it has equalled that total.[11] Prior to the collapse of the Soviet Empire, this increase in peacekeeping operations would have been highly unlikely not only because of the ideological differences between the opposing poles, but also because the Charter of the United Nations would have made it very difficult to even consider this large increase. There would always have been the threat of a veto by the Soviet Union in the Security Council. But the end of the Cold War changed all of that.

Article 2 of the United Nations Charter has historically given states the sovereign right to act as they wish within their borders.[12] This sovereign right has traditionally been held as sacrosanct and was crafted that way so that the major powers would agree to sign the Charter of the United Nations. But the end of the Cold War saw an evident lessening of the importance

of Article 2. For example, it could be argued that Article 2 lost much of its sanctity in 1991 when 20,000 NATO troops were deployed to northern Iraq without Iraq's consent and without significant protest from world opinion. As a result, today more United Nations forces "...are being sent into countries where there is no peace to keep--as peacemakers ... and even as a precaution against the initial outbreak of war."[13]

The U.S. operation in Somalia did not follow customary rules under the Charter of the United Nations. In all peacekeeping operations prior to Somalia, the peacekeepers went in with the understanding that they were invited to intervene by the local government. Also, there was the understanding that the peacekeepers would not use force except in self defense. Peacekeeping was placed conveniently under Chapter VI of the U.N. Charter, which provides for the pacific settlement of disputes.[14] But in Somalia there was anarchy and an absence of government. There was no legitimate international authority. In short, civil war and chaos confronted United Nations peacekeepers. In hindsight, it is not difficult to understand the contrasting situations between the war against Iraq and the intervention in Somalia. There was a clearly defined threat to the national interest in the former, thus making it easier to apply the full weight and power of the nation's armed forces and of its diplomacy to reverse the aggression. In the latter, the commitment of forces was done more as an emotional response to severe human suffering that was witnessed daily on television. Unlike the War in the Gulf, little, if any, thought was given to the political situation in Somalia. Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, characterized the tragic situation in Somalia well when he said that

> As I look back, one of the things that happened over the last several months is that we focused very heavily on the military track. We are now asking the United Nations to refocus on the political track and to try to seek a national reconciliation in Somalia so that that country can get on with its life and well-being... . We are

> looking to the African leaders to help us find an African solution to an African problem.[15]

The Somali intervention resulted in a unique engagement that is multilateral in character, where force can be used, if necessary, and where even political change can be promoted. In short, humanitarian intervention in a civil war, which was previously outside the ambit of foreign interference, now seems justifiable.[16] U.N. and international community involvement in Somalia set a precedent. John Stedman observed correctly that in the post Cold-War era we will face unique challenges. He, too, is not convinced that there is a model for the use of force in conflicts short of war.

> There are no panaceas for internal conflicts. The hope that international intervention in one war will prove a deterrent elsewhere is simply that--a hope, with little evidence to justify it as a proposition and plenty to suggest that domestic tyrants do not learn from other cases. Civil wars and ethnic rivalries have historical dynamics all their own that diminish the effects of precedents set elsewhere.[17]

IV. A Strategic Assessment of the Situation in Somalia: What went wrong?

More than twenty-four hundred years ago, Sun Tzu cautioned that "If you know neither the enemy nor yourself, you will succumb in every battle."[18] The Chinese strategist's dictum is as relevant today as it was then and failure to assess the situation in Somalia adequately prior to the introduction of American forces led to the current dilemma. An incorrect assessment of the enemy's capability, coupled with lack of clearly articulated and precise political objectives, led to the loss of American lives. American military strategy was inadequate to accomplish a changing mission.

In December 1992, President Bush urged the U.N. to accept American commitment of over 20,000 troops to provide a safe environment for the distribution of food to the Somali

people. The objective then was purely humanitarian, and the President indicated in a speech addressed to the people of Mogadishu, Somalia, shortly before the troops began to arrive, that "...We do not plan to dictate political outcomes. We come to your country for one reason only, to enable the starving to be fed."[19] Additionally, the President indicated that the United States would return the humanitarian mission to the regular U.N. peacekeeping forces once the situation had been stabilized. He said, "This situation is not open ended. We will not stay one day longer than is absolutely necessary."[20] However, he left open the possibility that the humanitarian mission was prepared to use force if necessary to meet its objectives when he cautioned that "... we will not tolerate armed gangs ripping off their own people, condemning them to death by starvation."[21] In hindsight, what the President did not realize when he made that speech and when he committed the troops to the humanitarian mission was that the situation in Somalia contained complex historical, political and military elements that had led directly to the present state of evident chaos in the country. If, as is evident from his remarks, President Bush's goal was "to have a long term, beneficial, impact on the suffering in Somalia, the risks were appreciably higher."[22]

Shortly after American troops were introduced into Somalia, military leaders discovered "just how difficult it is to keep the forces involved in strictly humanitarian objectives, and avoid getting caught up in the political struggles."[23] Efforts to prevent people from starving would necessarily cause the U.N. to want to disarm civilians and to create conditions that were conducive to food distribution. Order had to be established. This meant taking sides and making enemies. The leaders of the armed gangs that President Bush referred to saw themselves as more than armed thugs. They saw themselves as rival leaders, able to exercise influence over

many followers and willing to either curry favor with the U.S. to gain advantage or to bide their time until the American departure to claim their right to inherit power.

The humanitarian objective changed to a political objective in June 1993, after Operation UNOSOM was turned over to U.N. peacekeeping forces, of which Americans were to be a part. Shortly after the departure of the large contingent of American troops, Aidid was accused of ordering the killing of 24 Pakistani peacekeepers in an ambush and the U.N. issued a warrant for his arrest. The U.N. indicated it would try him as a criminal for killing the Pakistani soldiers. This single act, more than any other, would alter the mission to Somalia significantly. Now, there would be no doubt that the U.N. and the U.S. were taking sides, declaring enemies and pursuing a peace-enforcement role. But the military strategy was inadequate to support the enlarged political objective--Aidid's removal from Mogadishu.

Despite the fact that the United States had excellent, elite troops in Mogadishu, including Army Rangers equipped with sophisticated equipment, tragedy would strike for America on October 3, 1993, when 17 Americans were killed and 77 were seriously wounded in a fire fight with Aidid's followers in the center of Mogadishu. This tragic turn of events would, in turn, cause American public opinion to turn against involvement in Somalia--no matter what the mission. It galvanized the American people and the Congress against involvement in Somalia and led the president to declare that all American forces would be withdrawn by 31 March 1994. While President Clinton acknowledged that his administration had concurred in the change in policy to arrest Aidid, he said that he did not know that "...the orders to get Aidid and to punish him were still in force."[24] As if to underscore what must have been the agony of having to decide to abandon our original purpose in Somalia -- to help to promote our values -- President

Clinton said that "... our first priorities are our security interests and our economic interests. But our human interest in promoting democracy and peace and an end to starvation aren't insignificant."[25] Lost in the tragedy of the October 1993 battle in Mogadishu was the fact that by its intervention the United States helped to save thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands of lives.

It is thus evident that the decision to expand the role of U.N. forces from peacekeeping to peace-enforcement took on a momentum of its own. Without a clear, well defined political objective, involvement in Somalia resulted from what George Kennan would call an "emotional reaction, not a thoughtful or deliberate one... . It is one which was not really under control at all."[26] After the October 1993 tragedy, President Clinton declared that the time had come for the United States to "formulate a strategy that puts the affairs of Somalia back in the hands of Somalis."[27]

American strategic assessment of the situation in Somalia was flawed in several important respects. First, it did not take into consideration the political forces that had caused the civil war and that had led to the starvation and suffering witnessed on American television. Second, it did not establish a clear, well-defined, achievable political objective. Third, it underestimated the capabilities of the forces that could be turned against the United States. Fourth, it overestimated the capabilities of its own special operations forces to achieve decisive results.

Events that seemed to spin out of control in Somalia now present the opportunity for America to reevaluate its interests and its moral role abroad. The challenge for the National Command Authorities and for policy makers at the highest levels is not to let the problems encountered in Somalia dictate that the U.S. should avoid all future humanitarian missions or to

define interests so narrowly that, in the long run, the calls to isolationism cause it to lose its world leadership role. "The real danger of places like Somalia is that it can affect the willingness of the nation to remain engaged internationally on the really big ones ... in an interdependent world it is very dangerous for us not to be engaged."[28]

V. Self imposed Rules for the Use of Force: Are they useful?

Especially since the end of the Cold War, there has been a tendency in the Department of Defense to formulate rules to govern United States decisions concerning the commitment of U.S. forces to combat missions. In the Reagan administration, the Secretary of Defense formulated six rules that became known as the Weinberger Doctrine for the use of force. The purpose of the Weinberger Doctrine was to insure, among other things, that the United States would never again be involved in a no-win situation such as the Vietnam War. Similarly, prior to his appointment as Secretary of Defense, Les Aspin formulated rules that would guide his thinking in making decisions on the use of force. Secretary Aspin devised the following four propositions for the use of force:

- Force should be used only as a last resort. Diplomatic and economic solutions should be tried first.

- Military force should be used only when there is a clear-cut military objective. We should not send military forces to achieve vague political goals.

- Military forces should be used only when we can measure that the military objective has been achieved. In other words, we need to know when we can bring the troops back home.

- Finally, military force should be used only in overwhelming fashion. We should get it done quickly and with little loss of life, and therefore, with overwhelming force.

In this section, I will examine Secretary Aspin's propositions governing the use of force.

They will be examined not because they offered then or now a panacea for determining when and how to use force, but because, absent other criteria, these doctrinal propositions give an indication of the direction that a given administration seeks to follow in considering when and how to engage the armed forces in conflict after the Cold War. Having already determined that the decision to use American forces abroad ought to be made only after a careful consideration of all relevant factors, an examination of these four propositions for the use of force should help to clarify their usefulness.

Force should be used only as a last resort. Diplomatic and economic solutions should be tried first.

Given the preceding assessment of the strategic situation in Somalia, this first proposition was ignored in committing U.S. forces in December 1992, and again in June 1993, when the decision was made to expand their role from peacekeeping to peace-enforcement--that is, to attempt to capture Aidid. Diplomacy should have been used more extensively to try to solve problems in the region. In particular, the leaders of African nations should have been given more of a direct role in bringing peace to Somalia. As Jonathan Stevenson points out in his recent article in Foreign Affairs, "until very recently, only one sub-Saharan leader had bothered to visit Somalia, the President of Uganda and, with the exception of the Sudan, not a single country has bothered to send one grain of food."[29] When the decision to expand the mission from peacekeeping to peace-enforcement was made by the United Nations Secretary General, and announced publicly, the President and his advisors should have known that it would change the rules in Somalia. The decision to change the mission of U.S. forces from peacekeeping to peace-enforcement should have led to a new assessment of the strategic situation. This assessment

should have provided answers to three specific questions: What is to be done? What is it going to take to do it? What are the risks?

Had the importance of the increase in the scope of the mission to Somalia been properly evaluated, it is doubtful that the United States would have supported it. The decisions to take sides, to create enemies and to intentionally shift from peacekeeping to peace enforcement were made without thoughtful consideration of the possible consequences. While it is clearly evident that economic solutions or sanctions were and are inappropriate instruments of policy to use in Somalia, diplomatic options could have been used more fully .

Military force should be used only when there is a clear-cut military objective. We should not send military forces to achieve vague political goals.

This proposition was also violated. First, there never was a clear-cut military objective in Somalia. What started out to be a humanitarian mission expanded into a mission requiring the use of force when the U.N. decided to punish one of the clan leaders. The military objectives, to capture Aidid and to disarm his clan were unachieveable because the assessment of the strategic situation failed to indicate the mismatch between the objective and the forces available to achieve it. When the United States decided to embark on missions to disarm the different factions in Somalia and to arrest Aidid, the mission became highly politicized. It gave him the status he was seeking. By taking sides, the U.S. inadvertently created a hero with a strong following among people who adhere to clan based loyalties. Aidid had a distinct advantage. He knew his country and he also knew that he could use civilians as shields and other tactics repulsive to Americans to gain the advantage.

In a country that has historically been prone to violence, the United States should have

had a better appreciation for the potential dangers to American troops. A coherent plan involving the military, political, humanitarian and economic aspects never emerged. Control of the tactical and strategic situation was lost beginning with the announcement that the United Nations would capture Aidid and try him for the deaths of 24 Pakistani peacekeepers. It was lost completely in October 1993, when American troops engaged Somali guerrillas in Mogadishu. The loss of American lives caused the first serious evaluation of the situation in Somalia.

Military forces should be used only when we can measure that the military objective has been achieved. In other words, we need to know when we can bring the troops back home.

This proposition could not have worked in Somalia for several reasons. First, policy makers failed to take into consideration all of the uncertainties that can occur once the decision is made to commit forces. For example, no provision was made to insure that once the United States finished its initial work with the large deployment of December 1992, that the U.N. was capable of assuming the role started by the U.S. Almost immediately after arriving in Somalia, the U.S. expanded the mission of American forces from humanitarian assistance and peacekeeping to peace-enforcement. Among other things, it sought to disarm civilians who did not want to be disarmed. Since the U.N. historically has entered into humanitarian missions by conducting relations with all host nationals as friends, the decision to change the mission from peacekeeping to peace-enforcement should have caused the United States to reevaluate its decision to commit troops. It is difficult, if not impossible, to engage in disarming factions without also making enemies.

Once the initial contingent of more than 20,000 U.S. troops was evacuated, the U.N. forces left in place, including Americans, were no longer treated as friends. By agreeing to

expand the U.N.'s role to peace-enforcement without assessing the risks involved, the U.S. unwittingly insured that disengagement of the remaining troops would be even more difficult. U.S. withdrawal would be seen as a lack of will and leadership that would influence other nations to withdraw their support. Just the threat of the prompt withdrawal of U.S. forces caused the U.N. Secretary General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, to say, "The United Nations needs the United States. Finding the right relationship between the U.S. and the U.N. may be one of the most important tasks of our time."[30] Thus an additional dilemma is created for the United States: Should it completely abandon the U.N. in Somalia and, if so, what does this say for American commitment to friends and allies and to its own interests elsewhere?

Finally, military force should be used only in overwhelming fashion. We should get it done quickly and with little loss of life, and therefore, with overwhelming force.

There is no question that the United States could impose its will on Somalia by overwhelming force. Indeed, there is evidence that the initial deployment of troops was successful precisely because the United States possessed overwhelmingly superior force. However, even overwhelming force does not guarantee quick results, especially when the war to be fought in unconventional, guerilla war, for which our forces are either not trained or unprepared. Second, in places like Somalia, it is unlikely that the American public would support this type of warfare, especially if the enemy is willing to use civilians, including women and children, as shields to accomplish his objectives.

It would be nice if force alone were to solve the problems in Somalia. But it can't. Although the United States can exert sufficient force and power to literally destroy Somalia, what purpose would this serve? How long would we be involved then? Perhaps, as John

Stedman points out, the best policy, absent clear danger to international security or to American security is to let the civil war play itself out before intervening since most of these "...are amenable to settlement only after they have played themselves out with ferocity."[31]

VI. What are the Lessons of U.S. involvement in Somalia?

I began this essay by observing that centrifugal forces are at work in the present international environment and that these have tended to lead to disintegration in many regions. In areas that were only relatively recently freed from their colonial past, like Somalia, these same forces led to a disintegration of the government, resulting in chaos and civil war. While Somalia is not unique, the U.S.'s emotional response to an evolving civil war and the catastrophe it wrought on its people led to unintended consequences. The U.S. became involved in war, but was not properly prepared for it. As a result of this involvement, which resulted in the loss of American forces, the United States decided to withdraw completely from Somalia no later than the end of March 1994. Some view the March 1994 withdrawal as overdue, others as a mistake that may prove costly in terms of the damage to the image of American resolve and prestige that the planned withdrawal purportedly conveys. Despite the competing arguments for the use of force, the United States will undoubtedly be faced with other opportunities to influence the turn of events in other regions of the world. Important lessons have been learned from the U.S. intervention in Somalia.

In his recently published book, A Breakfast for Bonaparte, professor and diplomat Eugene V. Rostow, argues that America faces both foreign policy challenges and opportunities in the post-Cold War era. While the world is no longer bipolar, Rostow states the problem for the U.S. succinctly when he says that

> From the point of view of the United States, the revolution in the Soviet Empire is a glorious event, which should be greeted with hosannas. Unfortunately, however, it offers the nation no relief from the burden of having and carrying out a foreign policy.[32]

With the bipolar world of military and ideological competition at an end, the United States must now seek to define its foreign policy in ways that protect its interests and those of its allies. Involvement in Somalia can thus be seen as one of those post-Cold War experiences that can help to shape a new foreign policy. At least four lessons emerge from America's intervention in Somalia.

> o Before making a decision to commit U.S. forces to humanitarian and/or peacekeeping and peace-enforcement operations abroad, consider relevant political, military, diplomatic and economic considerations.
>
> o Centrifugal forces will likely continue to produce crises like Somalia in the future. These will also likely elicit highly emotional responses. Since American values will likely continue to dictate a humanitarian response, we must seek first to get regional organizations involved in solving disputes before we commit American troops.
>
> o War does not follow simple, scientific rules and can quickly escalate out of control. There is a danger in adhering too closely to rigidly conceived propositions for the use of force, especially if these convey the impression that these govern the use of force in all situations.
>
> o Establishing law and order in places where these either do not exist or have existed only superficially, as in Somalia, may take decades. We ought to be careful that we understand this before we make a commitment to the use of force.

Looking at the first of these lessons, it is not difficult to see that American concerns for and charity in providing humanitarian assistance to those in need have always been great. However, we need to realize that emotional responses to crises like Somalia can lead to greater involvement, with attendant risks and costs we may not be able to afford. If no national interests are at stake, then we should ask whether the commitment of U.S. forces makes sense. What are

the risks? What is the strategy to deal with these? Is there an appropriate, viable exit strategy? These are only some of the questions that deserve close examination prior to committing American forces to potentially volatile situations. A deliberate discussion of all of these questions may lead to the decision to use force because it is in the national interest to do so. Alternatively, it may lead to the opposite conclusion. What matters is that the process allows the president to make informed decisions on whether to commit U.S. forces to situations that may lead to combat and to casualties.

The second lesson is one that recognizes that in the future America may have to rely more on regional organizations to settle disputes and to perform in peacekeeping and peace-enforcement roles. Placing greater reliance on regional organizations to assist in alleviating humanitarian problems and in mediating internal disputes may be more appropriate in today's environment. By virtue of its power, America is at once held in the highest esteem in some quarters and universally despised in others. That means that in many of the evolving conflicts in the international arena, we may have to provide leadership, technical support and other assistance short of introducing troops.

If we decide to act unilaterally to provide assistance when no vital or national interests are at stake, then the number of places where we may be expected to intervene will place burdens on our economy and on our military forces that we simply cannot afford. Not only are operations like the one in Somalia financially burdensome, but they are also potentially harmful in degrading the readiness and morale of the armed forces, particularly in situations in which there are no clear cut objectives and military forces are not suited for the mission. International and regional organizations, however, may be better prepared and positioned to exert influence

in protracted civil wars or in intrastate humanitarian relief efforts. Third world countries, in particular, may have the advantage of being perceived as being neutral as opposed to the United States.

Another important advantage to allowing regional organizations to solve emerging problems like those in Somalia is that they are better prepared by virtue of their location and perhaps even by common ethnic or cultural ties to solve problems better than with a universal approach.[33] "Institutions like the U.N., linked as they are to the rigidities of the present international order, ...incline toward universality rather than discrimination of approach and thus are not suitable as vehicles for any significant changes... ."[34] We can play a significant role in this regard. The president can take the lead in efforts to convince the U.N. and world leaders to convene conferences to deal specifically with these issues, keeping in mind that they are not likely to disappear in the near future.

While the Security Council has been quite useful as a diplomatic forum since the Gorbachev era, it is handicapped because it can "undertake enforcement actions to defeat aggression only when the permanent members agree. As a result, the U.N. Charter offers the state system the unpalatable choice between unanimity and chaos in...attempting to deal with threats to the peace."[35] For the foreseeable future, the United States must continue to take a leadership role in helping to form the coalitions that will help to stop or reverse aggression or that will intervene in humanitarian missions. In short, the United States will "continue to rely on arrangements of collective self-defense like those of NATO, blessed where practically possible by the Security Council but used without that blessing when necessary."[36] John Stevenson points out that "New modalities and institutions will have to be devised to absorb burdens of authority

that the emerging nations are unable to bear, and to accept other burdens that some of the older nations are unwilling to continue to bear alone."[37] The increasing number of states with internal problems not easily amenable to solutions dictates, according to Stevenson, that these problems are "better faced in the regional context than in the universal one... . The institutions and procedures of the U.N., linked as they are to the rigidities of the present international order...incline toward uniformity...rather than discrimination of approach and thus are not suitable as vehicles for any significant changes along these lines."[38]

Does reliance on regional state actors and organizations mean that the United States should turn inward and become isolationist? No. On the contrary, it means that the United States must continue to lead. It also means that the United States must lead in ways that recognize that it cannot contain turmoil everywhere singlehandedly. Ambassador Rostow sums up this new approach as follows:

> In order to assure its survival, that is, to 'secure the Blessings of Liberty on ourselves and our Posterity,' in the language of the Constitution, America must renew its leadership of the regional coalitions required to achieve and maintain both a stable balance of power--as nearly as may be , a world of independent states living together peacefully, in accordance with the rules of law necessary to their cooperation.[39]

This suggests that international relations have become more, rather than less, complex. To safeguard its interests, the United States must not only continue to be engaged in the United Nations, it must also show renewed commitment and vigor in leading regional coalitions to assume a greater share of the burden for maintaining peace and security. However, the U.N. must, as President Clinton has already recommended, be keenly aware of its responsibility to pick carefully those areas in which it decides to intervene for the purposes of peacekeeping or for humanitarian relief. In short, the new international environment demands innovative, creative

solutions to increasingly complex problems.

The third lesson to be learned from the intervention in Somalia has to do with the tendency of policy makers at the highest levels to devise rules and propositions for the use of force that are either inappropriate or that, by their very complexity, would prevent the use of force anywhere. For example, former Secretary of Defense Les Aspin's four propositions for the use of force were all violated to some degree in the course of committing forces to the mission in Somalia. This does not mean that rules and propositions are not needed. It means that the United States must avoid the temptation to find neat, well ordered, clearly defined rules to govern the use of force everywhere. There should be one overriding rule to consider when making the decision to send American forces in harm's way. That rule should be that the lives of American men and women are put at risk because there is an identifiable American interest at stake. That interest should be identified at the highest levels of government. It should be discussed and debated. These discussions and debate must then lead to some consensus that the commitment of U.S. troops is the right thing to do. Finally, that consensus should provide the president with all that he needs to inform the public and to garner their support. If necessary, the president must inform public opinion, but he must be convinced, through this thoughtful process of deliberation, that the use of force does support an American interest.

In his analysis of the war in Somalia, Eliot A. Cohen observes that "Americans brought up with a heritage of anti-colonialism, seem to forget that establishing law and order in a society that has known neither is the work of decades."[40] The fourth lesson to learn from Somalia, then, is that nations cannot be built quickly. While the United States has had remarkable successes in removing tyrants and dictators from countries in our own hemisphere in places like Panama

and Nicaragua, it will take decades to establish strong, economically viable, lasting, democracies in these two countries. This, too, presents a viable argument for encouraging the involvement of regional organizations in settling disputes and in encouraging the growth of stable states internationally. We need to resign ourselves to the fact that we are good at providing humanitarian support in places where our assistance is wanted. We may not ever gain the patience or the willingness to bear the risks inherent in peace-enforcement and in nation building in places where fighting and lawlessness are the norm, not the exception.

VII. Conclusions and Implications for Policy

We made several mistakes when we decided to intervene in Somalia. First, we committed forces to a humanitarian mission without a clearly defined political objective. Though we said that the mission was humanitarian, we threatened Somalis with military force if they intervened. We made enemies. Almost immediately, we expanded the mission to include disarming factions, thus increasing the likelihood that we would make enemies. Second, we consented to a significant enlargement of the mission to Somalia to include the capture of a clan leader. Ends and means were not compatible and we suffered the loss of seventeen soldiers. There is still no consensus on a clearly defined political objective, though it appears that the aim is to seek a negotiated settlement to the dispute. With the American troops withdrawn, there is already evidence that Somalia will again revert to open civil war--the condition that existed prior to engagement of U.N. and United States forces.[41] There is evidence also that decades-old clan rivalries will again plunge Somalia into chaos and turmoil. The third, but most significant, mistake is that in sending troops to Somalia we neglected to conduct a thorough assessment of the situation there. We did not ask the important questions: What is the political objective?

What are the risks? When the mission expanded we were unprepared to execute it with the resources at hand.

Finally, there are important policy implications to be gained from our involvement in Somalia. These include the following:

- o Commitment to the use of force should not be made unless consensus has been reached at the highest levels. This insures that the commitment of American forces abroad is a deliberate, well thought out process--one that will garner the support of the public.

- o Forces of disintegration in the international environment dictate that the United States should maintain a strong intelligence capability. The Central Intelligence Agency and other intelligence agencies ought to refocus their attention on regional issues.

- o In today's increasingly anarchic international environment, situations will likely continue to arise that will require that we make decisions regarding the use of force. Humanitarian concerns and/or the national interest may require our involvement in some of these. Because we are the only remaining super power and because it is in our interest to remain actively engaged in international affairs, each crisis must be considered on its own merits and not weighed against Somalia as a precedent.

- o If we decide to introduce American forces into a crisis situation, we must consider political aims as well as military, economic and diplomatic objectives in making the decision to send forces in harm's way. A termination scheme ought to be a major part of the decision making process.

The first implication for policy has to do with the requirement in the post-Cold War era to ensure that there is consensus prior to making the decision to commit U.S. forces to situations that require them to be in harm's way. Admiral Paul David Miller, Commander, USACOM, suggests that this process should be aimed not only at the achievement of interagency consensus, but also at organizing interagency groups to formulate ways to carry out specific missions, including the husbanding of appropriate resources from all relevant agencies and in applying lessons learned from previous missions.[42] Admiral Miller suggests that without this type of

ongoing interagency coordination, peacekeeping, peace enforcement or peace making missions, will result in "mission creep of the kind in Somalia, with the United States (and specifically DOD) incrementally taking on greater and greater responsibility."[43]

A second benefit of achieving consensus entails gaining the support of the public for the commitment of forces to missions in which there is always some element of risk. It is clear from the involvement in Somalia that emotional responses to human suffering may be sufficient to garner temporary support for missions designed to provide humanitarian relief. But there has to be more than that. The president must articulate the interests that are served by the use of force in order to garner significant, important and lasting support. The National Security Advisor, Anthony Lake, described one of the lessons to be learned from the Somalia experience as having to do with the Administration's need to better explain interests in places like Somalia.

> Another lesson, Mr. Lake said, is that America does have interests and values at stake in places like Somalia, however limited, and the Administration needs to do a better job of explaining to the public what they are *because it can get costly when you get involved.*[44]

Because the potential for upheaval and violence in numerous regions of the world has increased dramatically since the end of the Cold War, it is prudent to develop policy guidance that will result in some degree of consensus within our government prior to making decisions to put American troops in harms way. If there is an inherent interest in placing Americans at risk in places like Somalia, then we ought to be able to articulate that interest.

The second implication for policy from the experience and lessons of Somalia is that the United States should strengthen its intelligence capabilities, particularly as regional conflicts continue to gain attention. Specifically, there is an evident need for greater emphasis on human intelligence as opposed to technical intelligence. No one would argue that America's technical

intelligence is not important. But it cannot provide the type of strategic intelligence that is important for the national leadership. For example, "Both the U.N. and the United States based their policies in Somalia on fundamental misunderstandings about Somali society, chiefly the idea that General Aidid personally was the problem and removing him from the equation was the solution."[45] To be sure, building a strong capability to collect and to assess human intelligence is a long term proposition. Not to improve our ability to collect and to properly assess intelligence, denies the president and national decision makers an important, perhaps the critically important, element necessary to the decision making process.

A third implication for policy has to do with the U.S.'s role as a leader in the new international environment. The transformation of the security environment from bipolarity to multipolarity has given rise to new security challenges. In a world less constrained by the bipolar relationship and the system of alliances that it engendered, international relations are more complex. Old strategies for managing security interests do not apply. The challenge for the United States is to adapt to the new international environment, and to continue to exercise leadership in the world. The experience in Somalia cannot be allowed to prevent us from exercising that leadership responsibility. To ignore that responsibility is tantamount to inviting harm to our security because we live in a world that is interdependent, requiring that we continue to remain engaged internationally in order to protect our security.

Violent ethnic and clan conflict in the Balkans and in Africa, the threat posed by the resurgence of nationalism in Russia and in some of the former Soviet satellite states, the threat of hostility by radical Muslims in Iran and elsewhere, and the rapid proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and technologies easily transferrable to weapons production and the means to

employ these, will continue to pose challenges to our security. These are the realities of the new post-Cold War environment. Under the circumstances, the worst thing that we can do after the experience in Somalia is to retreat into isolationism. The potential threats to our security do not allow it.

Finally, American strategy for the use of force must still consider all of its important components, including the military, diplomatic, economic and political objectives. In today's increasingly anarchic international environment, prudence dictates that the decision to send U.S. forces in harm's way should be the result of deliberate, thoughtful discussion at the highest level of our government. Recognizing the potential for prolonged conflict and civil war in many regions of the world today, our national leaders must formulate a clearly desired end state. That is, they must determine what the termination scheme should be. Not to have a termination scheme may lead to prolonged involvement in trying to solve crises that are not amenable to easy solution. Somalia is a case in point. It does not have to be repeated.

End Notes

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